2003 CAREER RETENTION SPECIALIST CONFERENCE

Manpower and Reserve Affairs

2002 Quality of Life in the U.S. Marine Corps Study

Purpose and Agenda

- Purpose: To provide a wavetop overview of results of the recently completed ***2002 Quality of Life in the U.S. Marine Corps Study***

- Agenda
  - Measuring Quality of Life
  - Prior Study Baseline
  - Current Study Findings (Marine and Spouse)
  - M&RA Focal Points

Study Purpose & Objectives

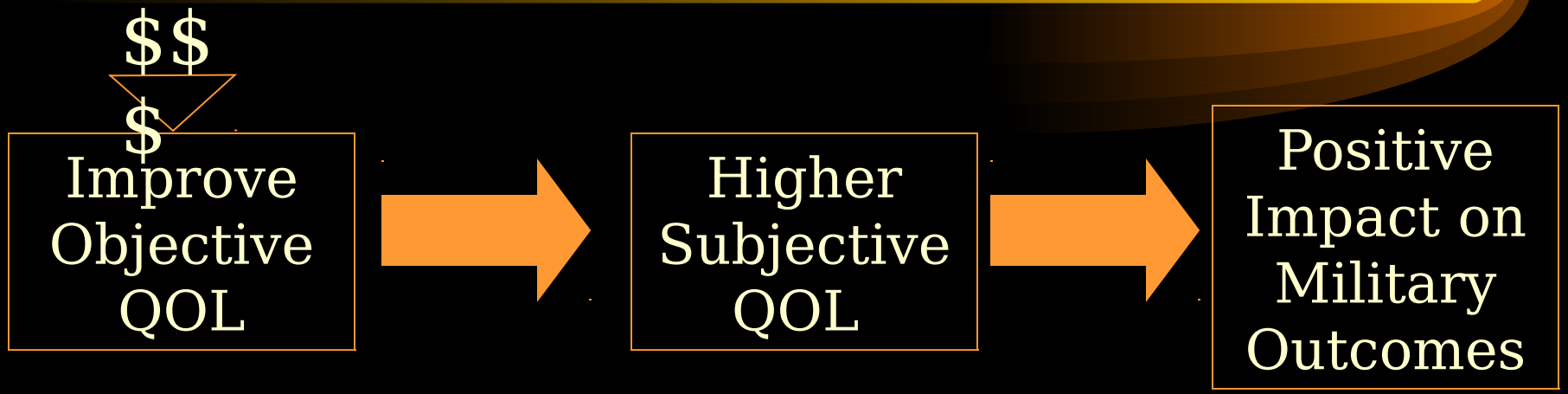
- Study Purpose: To determine the QOL views of Marines and families and to make comparisons to prior research where possible.
- Objectives:
  - Measure QOL perceptions/satisfaction of
    - Active Duty Marines
    - Independent Duty
    - Production Recruiters
    - Spouses
  - Assess overall QOL satisfaction
  - Measure satisfaction in specific life domains
  - Assess impact of QOL satisfaction on military outcomes

Measuring QOL in the USMC

- Objective Measures → tangible indicators that reflect living conditions
  - Inflation adjusted rate of pay
  - Average square footage of a base housing unit
  - Number of domestic violence incidents
- Subjective Measures → satisfaction, happiness, expectations
  - Are you paid fairly?
  - What are your expectations for your on-base residence?
  - How satisfied are you with your family life?

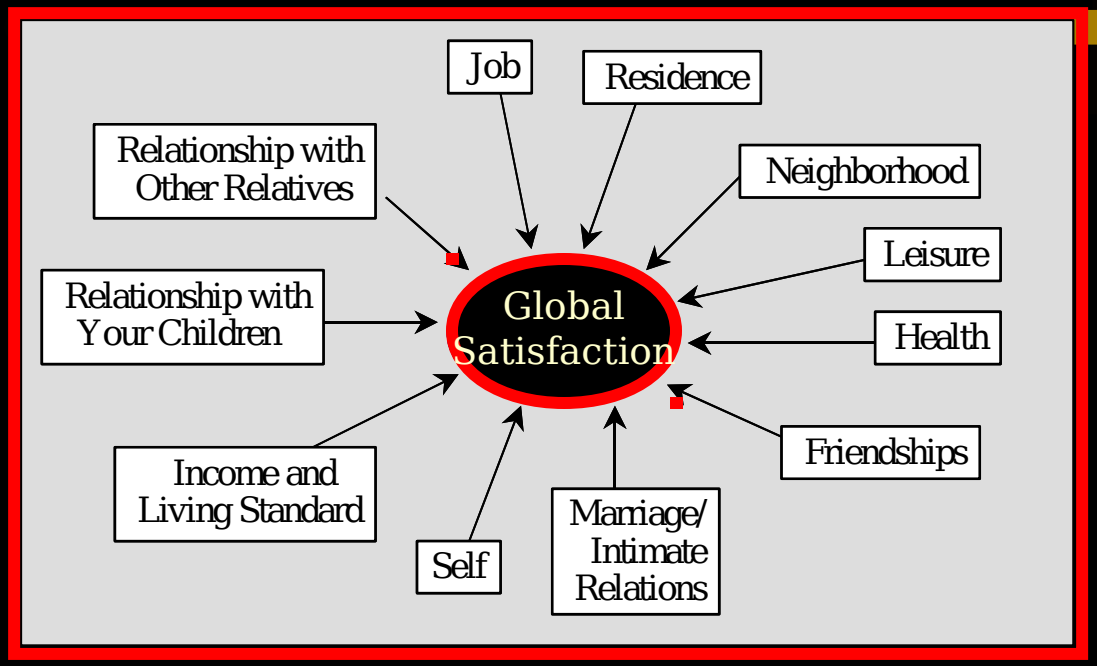
Improve objective QOL and subjective QOL will follow??

The Marine Corps QOL Model



Linkage: Commit resources (dollars, personnel, effort) to improving objective QOL and Marine/family QOL satisfaction will increase, thereby positively impacting military outcomes such as retention and readiness.

QOL Domains - Spillover



Improve satisfaction in domains and overall satisfaction will improve

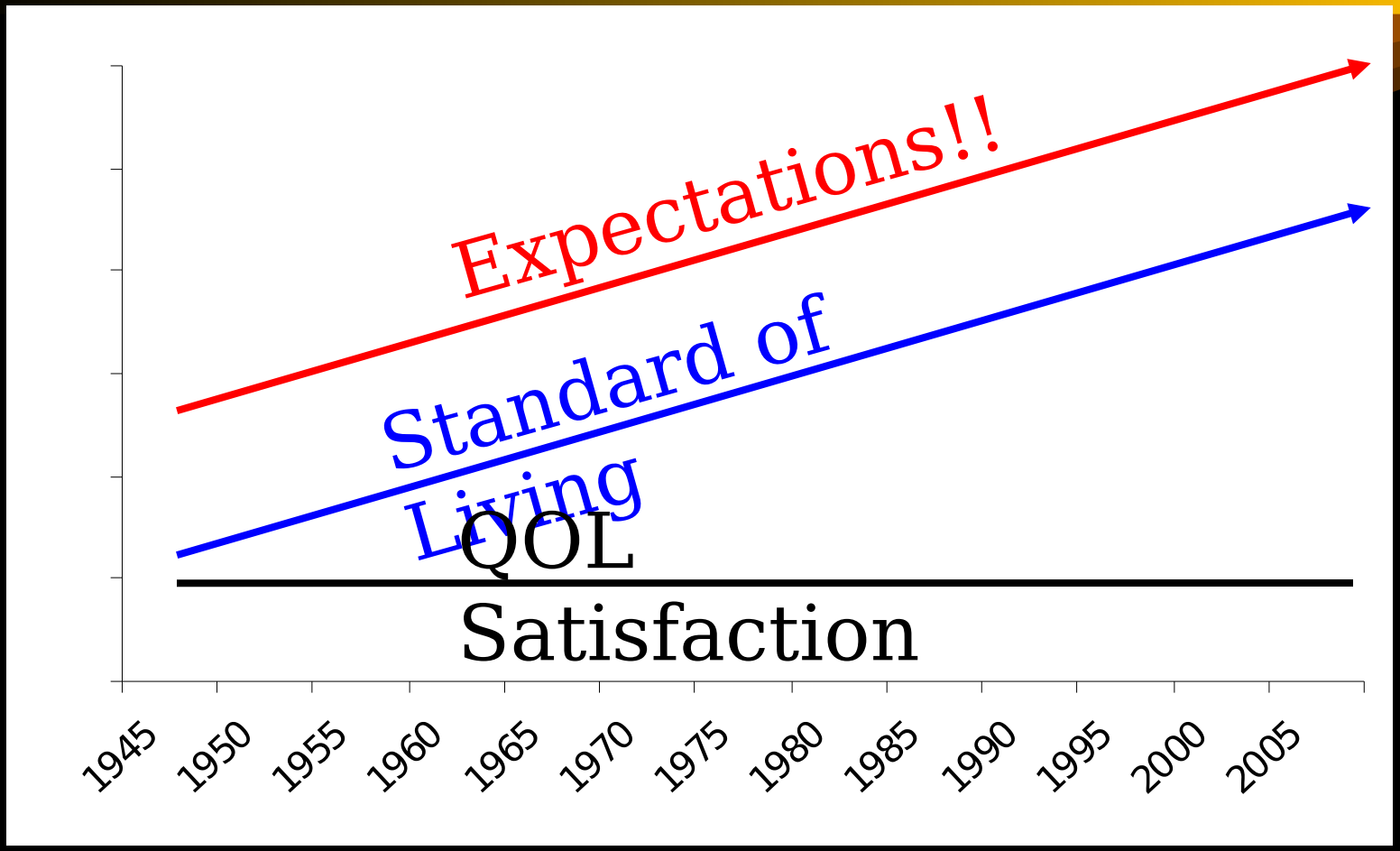
- Higher pay
- Better housing
- Better MCCS programs
- Better healthcare
- More childcare
- Better benefits

Role of Expectations in QOL…

- What do I expect from the Marine Corps?
- What do others have?
- What would I have as a civilian?
- What do I hope to have in the future?

When measuring QOL, we in large part are measuring the DELTA between what the Marine Corps "provides" and what our Marines and families EXPECT us to provide.

Impact of Societal Expectations on QOL



Post-World War II

Since 1974…

The percent of Americans with a college degree has grown by 93%

and

They are earning 64% more while working 10% less and producing at a 55% greater rate

and

They are living in significantly smaller households that occupy 50% larger homes

Prior USMC QOL Studies

- 1993 QOL Study
  - Link between QOL and behavior (military outcomes)
  - Marines satisfied in most life domains (exception was Income and Standard of Living)
  - Strong dissatisfaction with BEQs
  - Established imperative for QOL INVESTMENT
- 1998 QOL Study
  - Validated tie between QOL and behavior
  - Overall (Global) QOL satisfaction improved
  - QOL investments (objective) paying off through improved QOL satisfaction (subjective)

2002 Study Methodology

- Parallel methodology to that used in 1993 and 1998 (same Marine survey instrument)
- Separate spouse survey instrument to complete the QOL picture
- Data collection executed on-site (bases/ stations and production recruiters) and via mail (independent duty and spouses)
- Post-September 11th data collection (Feb-Mar 2002) → impact on findings?

Previous Results by Domain

Completely Dissatisified			Neutral			Completely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Residence	4.47	4.51
Neighborhood	4.89	4.92
Leisure and Recreation	4.34	4.52
Health	5.41	5.30
Friends & Friendships	5.30	5.39
Marriage/Intimate Relationship	5.85	5.85
Relationships with Your Children	5.55	5.41
Relationships with Other Relatives	5.52	5.60
Income & Standard of Living	3.93	3.93
Military Job	4.58	4.76
Yourself	5.73	5.75

Increase

No change

Decrease

2002 Domain Results

	1993	1998	2002
Residence	4.47	4.51	4.18
Neighborhood	4.89	4.92	4.61
Leisure and Recreation	4.34	4.52	4.13
Health	5.41	5.30	5.04
Friends & Friendships	5.30	5.39	5.18
Marriage/Intimate Relationship	5.85	5.85	5.59
Relationships with Your Children	5.55	5.41	5.09
Relationships with Other Relatives	5.52	5.60	5.29
Income & Standard of Living	3.93	3.93	3.72
Military Job	4.58	4.76	4.44
Yourself	5.73	5.75	5.57

The significant resourcing of QOL since the early-1990's has NOT improved satisfaction?

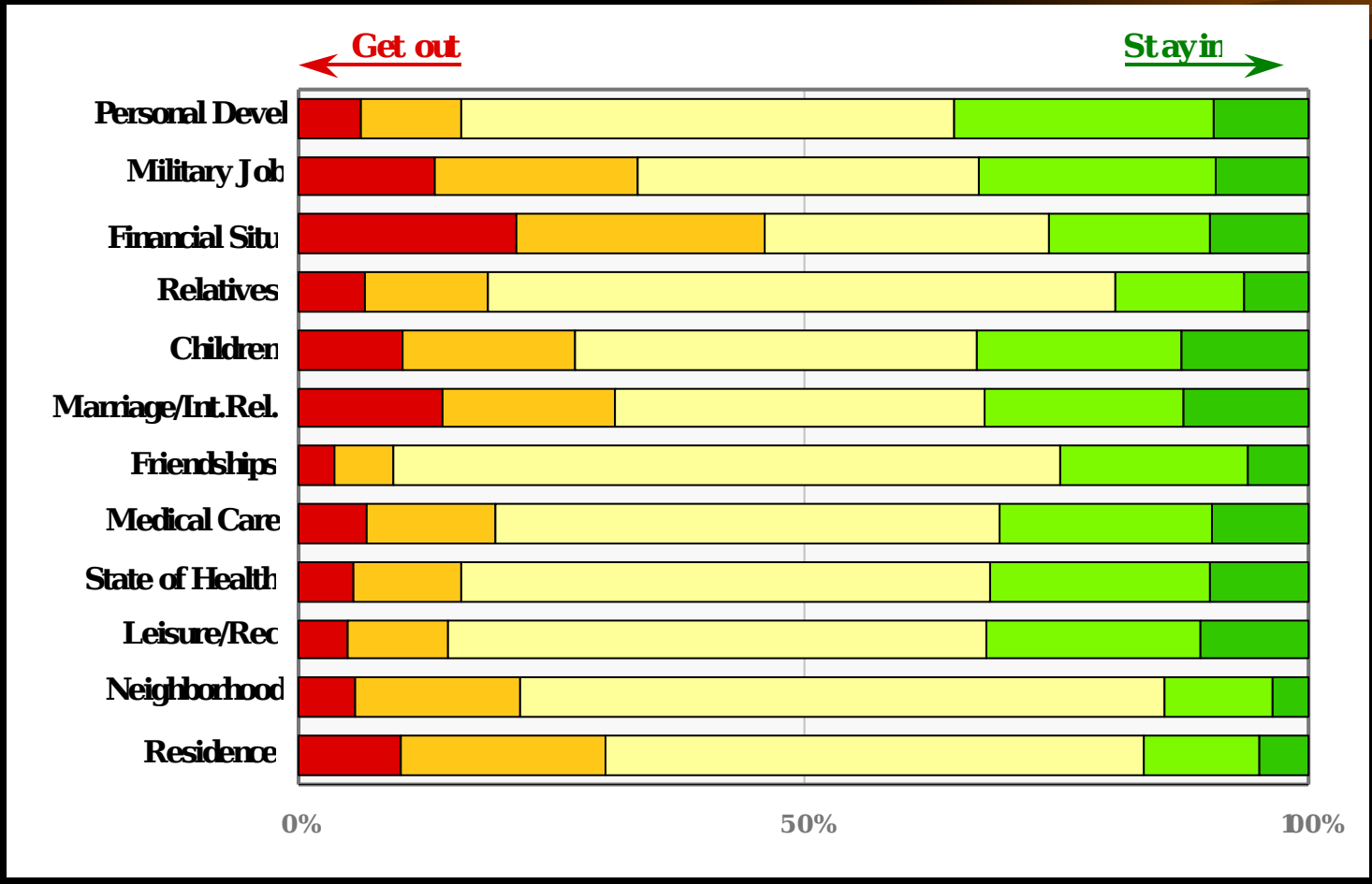
Overall QOL Satisfaction

Decrease in the Junior Enlisted Ranks

Life Domains → Global QOL

- Through analytical modeling procedures, the contractor sought to identify those domains that drive overall (Global) QOL….
  - Self
  - Military Job
  - Income (enlisted Marines only)
- Resulting impact on reported personal readiness and retention intentions is confirmed

Retention Influences



Income and Standard of Living

- As with 1993 and 1998, only domain in which overall, Marines are dissatisfied
- Decrease in satisfaction since 1993/1998
- Most significant declines for “Sgts & below”
- All other ranks “above the neutral point”

Objectively better, subjectively worse??

Keeping Pace with Society…

Base Pay: 1993 to 2002

Sergeant (over 8 years)

In 1993
$1,426 per month

Inflation adjustment

Sergeant (over 8 years)

In 2002
$1,783 per month??

Actual Sergeant Pay Rate in 2002 … $2,030

Residence Domain

- Military Housing
  - BEQ/BOQ satisfaction in “somewhat dissatisfied” range
  - Base housing satisfaction “neutral” → down significantly from 1993/1998 baseline
- Strong satisfaction with off-base housing
- Key drivers in residence satisfaction were *condition* and *attractiveness* over *privacy, cost,* and *comfort*

"Job" as a Marine

- Satisfaction with "Job" down across paygrades; however, satisfaction with "Self" remains strong
- Additionally, Organizational Commitment scores remain high (i.e., values, sacrifice, commitment)
- Key drivers for Marines satisfaction were *sense of accomplishment* and *responsibility*
- Marines report working 2.6 hours per week longer than was found in 1998 (55.0 versus 52.4 hours)
- TEMPO potentially negatively impacting satisfaction elsewhere (e.g., Leisure and Recreation)

Spouse Survey

- Based on framework of Marine survey (shorter and tailored to families)
- Different set of Life Domains

Residence

Separation

Relocation

Children's QOL

Leisure & Recreation

Pay & Benefits

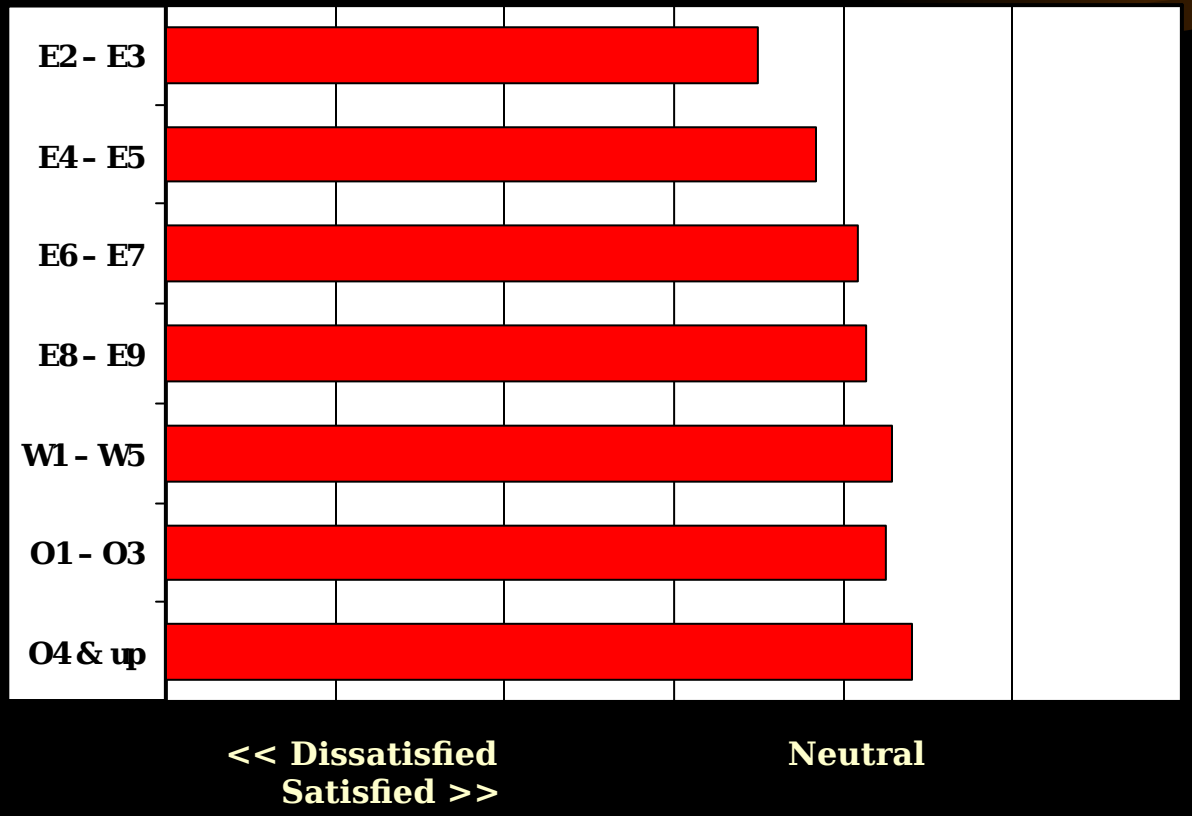
Support Systems

Job/Professional Dev

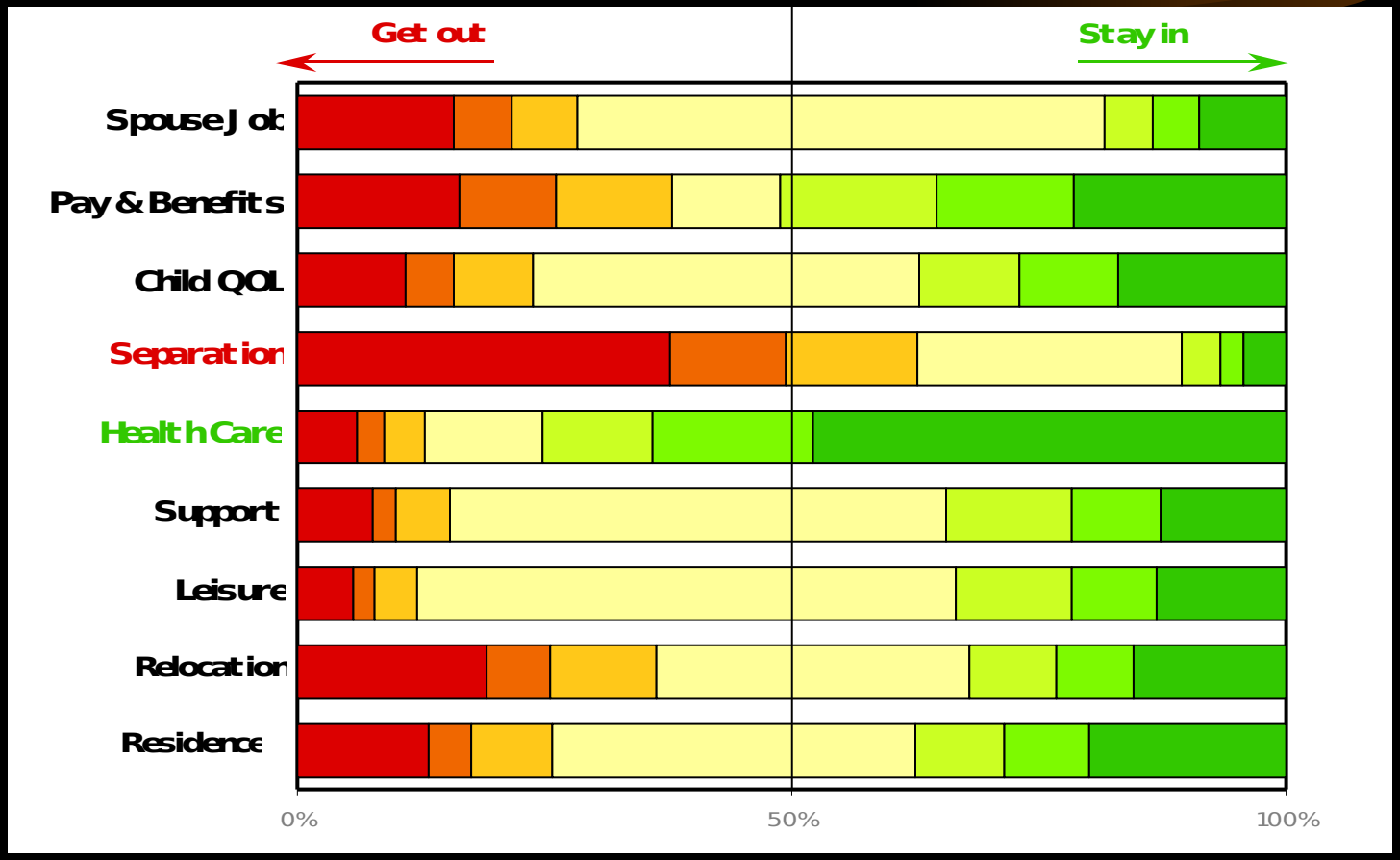
Health Care

Marine

Overall Spouse Satisfaction



Spouse Retention Impact



Major Spouse Findings

- Strong tie in perceived child(ren) QOL and overall family spouse QOL (Childcare is the key driver)
- Strong satisfaction with civilian vs. base housing
- Relocation satisfaction independent of the number of PCS moves
- Neutral point for separation is “3 months separated in last 12 months”
- Focus on areas that influence multiple domains … Spouse Employment may influence Job/Professional Development, Pay & Benefits, Relocation, and Separation

Written Spouse Comments

- Over 11,000 distinct comments transcribed and classified
- Skewed towards the negative (typical for optional written comments on surveys)
- Top areas of concern were
  - Pay (compensation relative to hours worked)
  - Base Housing (condition/availability/size)
  - BAH rates
  - Quality/Availability of Health Care
  - Impacts of Separation

Summary

The Marine Corps appears to do an effective job

in efforts to improve objective QOL

however…

The Marine Corps has not effectively communicated the QOL Benefit to Marines and families

A New USMC QOL Model

Establish QOL "Benefit"

Linkage: Commit resources to improve objective QOL while communicating the "benefit" (i.e., what to expect) to maximize improvements in QOL satisfaction and their resultant impact on military outcomes

M&RA Focal Points

- **Continue efforts to improve objective QOL**
- Further analyze data to assess decrease in QOL satisfaction:
  - Impact of societal/generational changes?
  - Unmet need?
  - Expectations beyond current capabilities?
- Define QOL Benefit (Endstate):
  - Align efforts to manpower management goals
  - “Social Compact” with Marines/families

“ I see our primary quality of life challenges to be managing the ever increasing expectations…”

LtGen Michael W. Hagee

Senate Confirmation Hearing

27 September 2002